

***Dead Bird Submission Instructions for Local Agencies***  
***California West Nile Virus (WNV) Dead Bird & Tree Squirrel Surveillance Program***  
***California Department of Public Health (CDPH)***  
***Division of Communicable Disease Control***

April 18, 2007

**Dead Bird and Tree Squirrel Reporting and Submission Instructions for Local Agencies**

When your agency receives a call from the public about a dead bird (especially recently dead crows, ravens, magpies, jays, or raptors) or dead tree squirrel, or one of your staff finds any dead bird, please immediately refer them to the **CDPH WNV and Dead Bird Hotline at 1-877-968-BIRD (2473)**.

The Dead Bird Hotline is monitored **8am - 5pm, 7 days a week**. CDPH will assess the suitability of the dead bird or tree squirrel for testing and contact your agency only if the carcass is approved for pickup. Any carcasses sent without prior notification will not be tested.

Only agencies listed under the permit issued to CDPH from the California Department of Fish & Game are authorized to pick up dead birds and tree squirrels. The agencies covered include local mosquito abatement districts, environmental health departments, and other designated agencies.

Members of the public may salvage dead birds found on their property or place of residence. **The public must first call the Dead Bird Hotline and obtain a Dead Bird Number**; a corresponding public salvage submission form will then be faxed to the appropriate agency. The public will be instructed by the hotline staff to double-bag the carcasses and drop them off at the designated agency within 24 hours, between 9 am - 3 pm, Monday – Friday, and **only in areas where local agencies are not picking up dead birds** (e.g., closed zip codes), unless otherwise requested by the local agency. **Note: only dead birds may be brought in by the public to local agencies for shipping. We discourage public salvage of all squirrels because ground squirrels, which could be infected with plague, may be confused with tree squirrels.**

***weblinks:***      [bird and tree squirrel ID chart \(pdf\)](#)      [tree squirrel surveillance Q&A \(pdf\)](#)

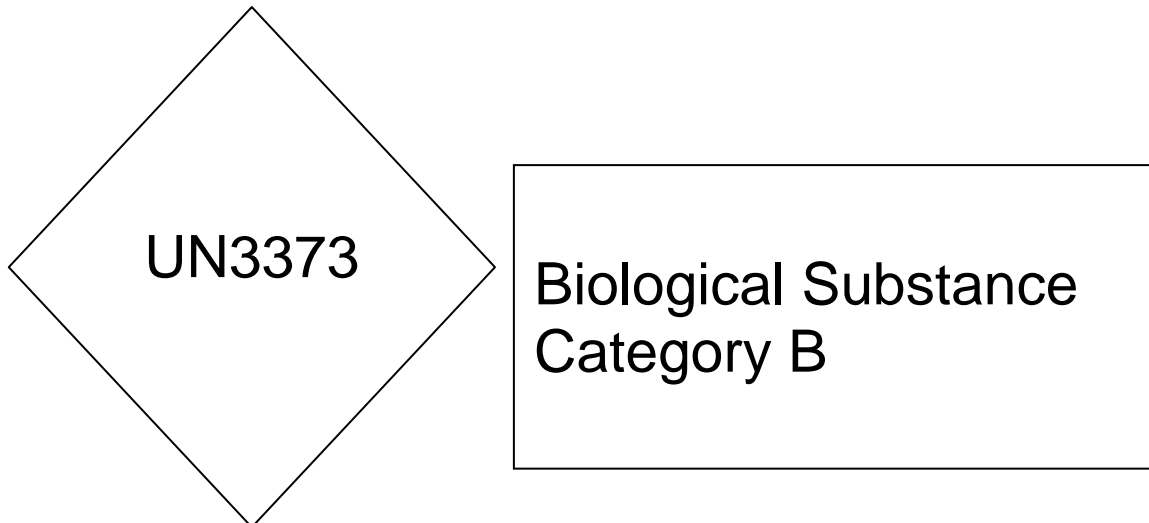
Once the submission is approved, your agency can ship the carcass to the California Animal Health & Food Safety laboratory at UC Davis (CAHFS Central). Carcasses delivered to CAHFS Turlock, Fresno, or San Bernardino laboratories will be transported by CAHFS to the UC Davis laboratory. CAHFS Central will then remove specific tissues and forward the samples to the UC Davis Center for Vectorborne Diseases (CVEC) for WNV testing. Shipping and testing expenses will be paid by CDPH.

***NEW!!*** Carcasses are considered **Category B, Biological Substances**. This replaces the old designation, "Diagnostic Specimen".

To ensure the carcass arrives at CAHFS in a testable condition, to protect your safety, and to comply with shipping regulations, please follow these instructions:

- Only dead birds and tree squirrels can be picked up under our permit.
- Wear rubber or latex gloves when handling all carcasses. If gloves are not available, use a plastic bag -- turned inside out -- over your hand and invert the bag to surround the carcass. Do not touch a carcass with bare hands.
- **Collect fresh carcasses.** Badly decomposed or scavenged carcasses are of limited diagnostic value. Signs that a bird or squirrel has been dead for too long (over 24-48 hours) are the presence of maggots, an extremely lightweight carcass, missing eyes, skin discoloration, skin or feathers that rub off easily, strong odor, or a soft, mushy carcass.
- **If upon pick-up the carcass is found to be unacceptable (e.g. a species your agency or CDPH is not accepting or a badly decomposed specimen), please collect the carcass, double-bag it, and dispose of it in a secure garbage can or dumpster.** California Department of Fish & Game prefers that you burn or bury the carcass, but disposing of it in a dumpster is also acceptable. **Please call CDPH immediately and notify us that the animal will no longer be submitted.**
- Place each carcass into two sealed (zip-locked) plastic bags. **Double-bagging prevents cross-contamination and leakage. There should always be two bags separating the carcass from shipping documents.**
- Enclose the shipping documents into a SEPARATE ZIP-LOCK BAG. The primary shipping document is a copy of the dead bird submission form which contains the dead bird number and which is located on the Surveillance Gateway or faxed by CDPH. CAHFS prefers that you put this separate zip-lock bag inside the outer bag containing the dead bird or squirrel.
- **Pack the carcass with blue ice packs.** Please limit the number of ice packs to the number required to keep the carcass fresh, as the weight of extra ice packs add to the shipping charges. In accordance to shipping regulations, an absorbent material such as newspaper must be included in the box to prevent any leakage.
- Ship the carcass in a hard-sided plastic cooler or a styrofoam cooler placed in a cardboard box. Unprotected styrofoam containers cannot be shipped without an outer box or container, as they may break into pieces during shipment. **Contact UPS/GSO directly to arrange for carrier pickup Monday through Thursday; this guarantees arrival at CAHFS before the weekend.**
- Contact **UPS** to pick up carcasses either by web ([https://wwwapps.ups.com/pickup/schedule?loc=en\\_US](https://wwwapps.ups.com/pickup/schedule?loc=en_US)) or by phone **1-800-PICK UPS** (1-800-742-5877). **Select “UPS Next Day Air” and estimate the weight of the box** (generally 10 lbs for a single large bird packed with ice). Please DO NOT UNDER-ESTIMATE the weight of a package. For billing, the **UPS account number is: 48R89V.**

- If your agency uses **Golden State Overnight (GSO)**, please call 1-800-322-5555 and use the DHS account number (**22971**) and the DHS billing zip code (**94804**). It is also possible to access GSO on the web to arrange a pickup (<http://www.shipgso.com>).
- Carcasses that need to be stored for an extended time period (over 2 days) should be put on dry ice or stored at -70°C. If it is not possible to store carcass at -70°C, a carcass may be stored at 0°C (regular freezer) for a short period of time. **Refrigerating** the carcass is recommended for **overnight storage only** (this slows virus deterioration, but does not stop it).
- Label the outside of the package with the words **ATTN: WNV** above the designated CAHFS address. **Attach the required shipping stickers/labels (Biological Substance, Category B and UN3373) according to the instructions, all provided by CDPH.** (The drawings below are examples of the required shipping stickers/labels. *Please note: these drawings are NOT drawn to scale.*)
- Once West Nile virus is found in an area, agencies may test corvids via VecTest or RAMP assays. While results can be entered directly into the Surveillance Gateway, please **notify CDPH with results by 4:00pm Friday of each week to have results included in reports for the following week's State WNV updates.** Reporting forms can be found at (<http://www.westnile.ca.gov/resources.php>). **Note: any positive bird must be disposed of as biomedical waste (incineration).**



## **Dead Bird Shipping List**

Please verify that your agency has the following items:

- CAHFS Address (see below)
- UN3373 Stickers
- Biological Substance, Category B Stickers
- GSO or UPS preprinted labels
- WNV hotline number (877-968-BIRD; manned 8am - 5pm, 7 days a week)
- Crumpled newspapers or another absorbent material
- Rubber or Latex Gloves
- Packing tape
- Dead Bird Shipping Boxes
  - inner zip-lock bag
  - outer zip-lock bag
  - inner styrofoam box
  - outer cardboard box
  - blue ice packs

### **California Animal Health & Food Safety (CAHFS) laboratories:**

#### **CAHFS Central (530) 754-7372**

ATTN: WNV

Jacqueline Parker

University of California, Davis

West Health Science Drive

Davis, CA 95616

#### **CAHFS Fresno (559) 498-7740**

*(FORWARDS CARCASSES TO CENTRAL)*

ATTN: WNV

Dr. Richard Chin

2789 South Orange Avenue

Fresno, CA 93725

#### **CAHFS Turlock (209) 634-5837**

*(FORWARDS CARCASSES TO CENTRAL)*

ATTN: WNV

Dr. Bruce Charlton

P.O. Box 1522

Fulkerth & Soderquist Road

Turlock, CA 95381

#### **CAHFS San Bernardino (909) 383-4287** *(FORWARDS CARCASSES TO CENTRAL)*

ATTN: WNV

Dr. Hilu Kinde

105 West Central Avenue

San Bernardino, Ca 92408